Route 12 - Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21701

December 20, 1978

The Honorable Louis Stokes
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Stokes:

As you are aware, I was at your December 1 hearing with Jim Lesar and John Ray to assist them. Both asked this of me, as both also had asked it for the executive session from which, at Mr. Blakey's suggestion, Mr. Fauntroy expelled me.

Mr. Lesar is ill. Mr. Ray, as you know, is confined to jail. From each I have the excerpts of transcript of the December 1 session provided by your staff. Neither is complete. I have put both sets together and in combination they are far from complete. The staff has gone to considerably more trouble to deny a full transcript than merely xeroxing the whole thing would have involved. I enclose the list provided with each set.

These withholdings of the public record are not inconsequential. They begin with the entire narration, upon which the entire day's testimony was predicated. They include such significant matters as the immunization under court Order.

Mr. Lesar, to my knowledge, asked your staff for an uncensored transcript. As of today, it had not been provided, if the staff intends to provide it at all without direction from higher authority.

It simply is not possible to fully comprehend the pages provided without those that are withheld. There is no good reason for the withholding. There certainly is no need, no secrecy. It was broadcast from coast-to-coast and tape-recorded, including for me. It was ever so much more trouble to read and excerpt than it would have been merely to xerox.

Because this is public record, I assume the staff went to this extra trouble to serve the end accomplished by it. I therefore hope that to the degree now possible, given the imminence of the official end of the committee's life, that you will rectify this promptly and avoid the obvious implication, that all those fine statements about seeking truth only and about providing John Ray with a full opportunity to inform the committee and perfect its public record will not be utterly meaningless, mere self-serving statements by the committee.

Because of the extra time required of him by representing John Ray in several other cases, Mr. Lesar was not able to make court filings within the time allowed. When he is again able to work, he will again be overloaded. I therefore ask that you send a full transcript to each of us, for which I will pay if necessary, or to provide the missing pages. The enclosed lists enable the latter if that is your preference. I will go over these pages for Mr. Lesar as soon as I receive them. If you will not provide a complete copy to John Ray, I will.

For your information, I have prepared a memo for Mr. Lesar on some of your exhibits relating to the bank robberies your committee attributes to John Ray. This was necessary because of the committee's threat to have John charged with perjury. The same need requires an unexpurgated transcript and all exhibits. In not providing these initially, the committee discriminated against John.

As I wrote you earlier (without response), from my prior experience I am aware of how Members sometimes are held to account for what is done by their staffs. Now you have sat through the ultimate, your day of accounting, the climax of your hearings, the build-up to John as the robber of banks to make the assassination possible. You say you consider yourself a good lawyer. You have had an opportunity to assess the evidence and decide for yourself how it stacks up. I think it appropriate for you also to assess the description of it made to the Parole Commission by your chief counsel. I therefore include a copy of its internal record quoting Mr. Blakey as describing it as "conclusive" proof.

Whether or not "conclusive," if indeed any kind of proof, may be judged elsewhere.

The committee, individually and collectively, has made it clear that nothing is going to influence its determination to have its preconceptions appear as a report of its conclusions. If belatedly it wanted anything else - and there is no reason to believe it does - that is now impossible. In this the committee will be doing precisely what was done before it by those bodies it has criticized and clearly enough will criticize in its report. I would hope that it would not further duplicate the errors of the Warren Commission and the executive agencies like the FBI by censoring and suppressing evidence.

Withholding of any pages of the December 1 transcript from John Ray and those whose assistance he requested serves no other purpose, particularly at this late hour. This withholding is not consistent with the committee's pious and repeated proclamation of its quest for truth and fact only.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. December 21, 1978

Last night I began receiving calls from the media about Congressman Sawyer's disclosure of your newest experts' report on the police tape. I have no independent knowledge of the tape or of the validity of the tests. But I have considerable subject matter knowledge and it was available to the committee, which did not want it from the first. Based on this subject matter knowledge, I tell you that your problems only begin with what the experts' report does to your own report that now, consistent with your preconceptions, must be largely drafted.

What it does to your integrity and that of all your prior experts, if confirmed, will resonate through history.

Your committee, whether or not with the personal knowledge of the Members, arranged for deliberately dishonest expert testimony.

Dr. Baden's testimony in <u>both</u> cases was <u>deliberately</u> false and <u>deliberately</u> misleading. He was not alone, although he was basic, others saying their so-called conclusions were based on his conclusions.

There is no possibility that at least some members of your staff were not consciously dishonest in this. There is no possibility that your chief counsel and staff director was not <u>deliberately</u> dishonest in this.

I am the one so-called "critic" whose name was never mentioned at your hearings by Member or staff. But I was very much there. The evidence you attempted to put down, where you deal with substance rather than idle theories, I first brought to light. This includes the medical and related evidence, all of it. Your staff was aware of this, having bought my books from me - some of them, rather, and then in great haste - for the use of your panel. What I published was known to your committee. Despite all the effort made possible by the largest appropriate in the history of Congressional investigations, despite the reputations of your so-called experts and the media manipulation you were able to contrive, as a matter of fact rather than of propaganda, the work I did remains unrebutted.

The committee's dishonesty in all of this is underscored by its knowledge and its avoidance of any dispute with me by never saying a word about me or my work.

In fact, where it was not conjecturing, the committee was often enough claiming for itself the work I had completed long before there was any committee. Had you not done this, what outside of Congress is described as stealing, you would have been virtually without <u>any</u> substance in your JFK hearings. (On MLK, you had nothing of substance - nothing other than fabrication - that I did not obtain from the FBI in C.A. 75-1996.)

No matter what now happens, you have all done yourselves in by not doing what you, self-described as a good lawyer, should have known you had to do. You denied yourself adversarial benefit. Instead, you undertook to deprecate all those you anticipated would be adversaries. Even this was done dishonestly, with a guilt-by-association variant. This is why you held executive sessions where there was no legitimate need for secrecy. The secrecy was to protect the committee only in its Cointelproing of the nation.

This also is partial explanation of your chief counsel's refusal to let me have copies of your <u>public</u> information to present to courts of law. You will be printing what I asked for. It was broadcast from coast-to-coast. But your "professor" would not risk any interpretation other than of his contrivance prior to the public attention that can be expected for his and your preconceptions that will be guised as the end product of agonizing deliberation and much "evidence."

If you had not done these dirty things in secret, you could not have done them at all. Having sowed thorns, you will harvest thorns, one way or another.

Whatever follows this news report, your troubles are not over and they are not by any means limited to the JFK case.

You have had John Ray thrown back in jail for the perjury of others and you may yet persuade the Department to charge him with perjury. I have examined your case, even your imputation of motive. If there is a trial, you will have newer problems, even with the alleging of racism as motive. Have you examined the record of your own committee on racism? It is available to you in the National Archives, as it is and would have been from my files. Your committee has a Member who, unlike John Ray who holds beliefs only, took an overt step to implement his anti-black racism and to harm others.

I am not the lawyer you are but my layman's view is that this Member would make an excellent expert witness on motive!

Whatever now follows, you are all like the biblical maiden who, entrusted with the keeping of the vineyards, her own vineyard did not keep.

H.W.